



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives

Representative Maria Syms (R-28)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Representative Syms' Legislation Establishing Sextortion Offense Signed Into Law

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX –Representative Maria Syms (R-28) today thanked Governor Ducey for signing into law legislation that she sponsored to create a criminal sextortion offense in order to protect people from sexual predators engaged in extortion.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, online sextortion is by far the fastest growing threat to children. [HB 2053](#) establishes a sexual extortion offense that prohibits knowingly communicating a threat intended to coerce someone into transmitting sexually promiscuous images of themselves or engaging in sexual acts. The Class 3 felony would be punishable by 3½ years in prison and up to \$150,000 in fines. If the victim is under 15, the offense would be a Class 2 felony punishable by 10 years in prison, up to \$150,000 in fines, and require the perpetrator to register as a sex offender.

“Sextortion is the fastest growing internet crime against children, and I am proud of Arizona for taking the lead in stopping these predators,” said Representative Syms. **“This new offense gives law enforcement officials the tools they need to go after those that try to coerce others into engaging in sexual acts. As a mom to teenagers myself, I urge everyone to remain vigilant about their children’s online activity so we can prevent sexual abuse. I’m grateful to my colleagues in the Legislature and Governor Ducey for recognizing the danger of sextortion and taking action to prevent it.”**

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